EXCISE

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ACTION SS 25

INFO SSO 00,NSCE 00,CCO 00,/025 W

P R 160520Z AUG 67
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4665
INFO CINCPAC

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Susan Lyndon DATE 10/7/81
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

S E C R E T SAIGON 3223

EXDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

1. FOLLOWING A MEETING WITH GENERALS KY, CAO VAN VIEN AND THANG ON OTHER SUBJECTS, I HAD AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A BRIEF PRIVATE EXCHANGE WITH KY ON THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN. HAVING IN MIND REPORTS FROM OTHER SOURCES OF HIS CURRENT MOOD OF FRUSTRATION AND UNCERTAINTY, I TOLD HIM ONCE AGAIN THAT OUR POLICY ON THE ELECTIONS WAS CLEARLY TO SUPPORT NO CANDIDATE AND TO OPPOSE NO CANDIDATE, AND TO FAVOR FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS. NOTING THE CURRENT CHARGES AND COUNTERCHARGES BEING AIRED BY

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CANDIDATES ON BOTH SIDES, I REMARKED TO KY THAT WITH THE GREAT ADVANTAGES THAT LIE WITH THE GOVERNMENT TICKET, HE AND GENERAL THIEU COULD AFFORD TO LEAN OVER BACKWARDS IN TERMS OF RUNNING THE CAMPAIGN IN A WAY THAT IS SATISFACTORY TO ALL THE CANDIDATES. HE REFERRED TO THE SHARP CRITICISMS OF HIM AND THE GVN BY THE CIVILIAN CANDIDATES AND CRITICISMS IN THE U.S. PRESS AND CONGRESS WHICH HE FELT BASED ON MISINFORMATION AND LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF THE FACTS. I POINTED OUT THAT IF ONE WANTS TO ENTER THE POLITICAL ARENA ONE MUST EXPECT CRITICISM AND CITED HARRY TRUMAN'S FAMOUS PHRASE, " IF YOU CAN'T STAND THE HEAT, STAY OUT OF THE KITCHEN,"I THOUGHT HE AND THIEU COULD AFFORD

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TO IGNORE MOST OF THE CRITICISMS UNLESS THEY TURNED UP LEGITIMATE CAUSES OF COMPLAINT SUCH AS HARRASSMENT OR PRESSURE BY GVN OFFICIALS, IN WHICH CASE REMEDIAL ACTIONS SHOULD BE TAKEN.

2. KY THEN SAID THAT GENERAL THIEU WAS AWAY FOR 4 DAYS IN II CORPS BUT THAT THEY HAD AGREED TOGETHER ON A COURSE OF ACTION TO TRY TO OVERCOME MISTAKEN IMPRESSIONS ABROAD ABOUT THE ELECTIONS. KY SAID THEY PLAN TO WRITE TO THE ALLIED GOVERNMENTS

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TO EXPLAIN FULLY WHAT THE GVN HAS DONE AND IS DOING TO ASSURE FREE AND HONEST ELECTIONS. HE SAID THEY WOULD CITE SUCH ACTIONS AS THE LIFTING OF CENSORSHIP, PROVISION OF TRANSPORTATION AND FUNDS FOR CANDIDATES, INSTRUCTIONS TO PROVINCE CHIEFS, DISTRICT CHIEFS AND THE ARMED FORCES ANOT TO EXERT PRESSURE THROUGH THIER OFFICIAL POSITIONS. FREE THIME ON GOVERNMENT R/ IO AND TELEVISION FOR ALL CANDIDATES, ARRANGING MEETINGS AROUND THE COUNTRY FOR JOINT APPEARANCES OF CANDIDATES, AND INVITATIONS SENT TO VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS, FRIENDLY GOVERNMENTS AND THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS TO OBSERVE THE ELECTION . HE REMARKED IN THIS CONNECTION THAT THE ARRANGING OF MEETINGS WAS NOT ACTUALLY REQUIRED UNDER THE ELECTORAL LAW BUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT PLANNED TO DO SO ANY WAY. HE REMARKED RUEFULLY, AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE PROBLEMS THE GOVERNMENT HAS, THAT ELABORATE PLANS HAD BEEN MADE FOR THE JOINT APPEARANCE OF CANDIDATES AT BEIN HOA AUGUST

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15, ONLY TO BE TOLD BY THE CANDIDATES THAT THEY WANTED TO CHANGE IT TO AUGUST 16, WHICH MEANT A GREAT DEAL OF ADDITIONAL WORK FOR THE GVN AUTHORITIES.

3. [redacted] SAW KY SHORTLY AFTER ME, TO RAISE PROBLEM OF [redacted] PARLIAMENTARY AND PRESS REACTION TO CAMPAIGN, AND RECEIVED SIMILAR DESCRIPTION OF GVN INTENTIONS. WE BOTH AGREED COMMUNICATION TO ALLIED GOVERMENTS

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SHOULD BE HELPFUL.

4. COMMENT: KY WAS IN A FAIRLY PHILOSOPHICAL MOOD ABOUT THE ELECTIONS AND SEEMED FULLY AWARE OF THE NEED TO TAKE CERTAIN ACTIONS TO OVERCOME THE IMPRESSION HERE AND ABROAD THAT THE ELECTIONS WOULD NOT BE FAIR AND HONEST. I URGED HIM STRONGLY TO LEAN OVER BACKWARDS IN MEETING WHAT MAY SEEM UNREASONABLE DEMANDS FROM THE CIVILIAN CANDIDATES. I WILL CONTINUE TO PURSUE THIS LINE WITH HIM AND THIEU. BUNKER

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